

Inappropriate or Excessive Intake of Dietary Supplements Including Vitamins, Minerals and Herbal Remedies

Definition/ cut-off value

Participant routinely taking inappropriate or excessive amounts of any dietary supplement with potentially harmful consequences, including but not limited to ingestion of unprescribed excessive or toxic:

- C multi or single vitamins
- C mineral doses
- C herbal remedies

Participant category and priority level

Category	Priority
Pregnant Women	IV
Breastfeeding Women	IV
Non-Breastfeeding Women	VI
Infants	IV
Children	V

Justification

A participant taking inappropriate or excessive amounts of single or multivitamin or mineral or herbal remedy not prescribed by a physician is at risk for a variety of adverse effects including harmful nutrient interactions, toxicity, and teratogenicity.

While many herbal teas may be safe, some have undesirable effects, particularly on infants who are fed herbal teas or who receive breast milk from mothers who have ingested herbal teas. Examples of teas with potentially harmful effects to infants include licorice, comfrey leaves, sassafras, senna, buckhorn bark, and chamomile.

Clarifications/ Guidelines

Before assigning this risk code, determine *routine* use and be sure the specific dietary supplement, vitamin, mineral or herbal remedy is documented on the diet/health history form.

This risk code does not apply to the regular use of a multivitamin/mineral supplement. A complete multivitamin/mineral may offer benefits that are safe and effective for some people. The American Dietetic Association recommends for those who choose to take a supplement, it is best to select a product that provides no more than 100 percent of the Daily Value for vitamins and minerals.

Herbal remedies constitute any herb that is used to treat a medical condition that is not prescribed by a physician. Many herbs may produce a variety of

**Clarifications/
Guidelines**

effects including harmful nutrient interactions, toxicity, and teratogenicity (ability to cause abnormal fetal development and birth defects).

Manzanilla tea is the same as chamomile tea, which is included in the list of examples of teas with potentially harmful effects to infants.

References

1. Zimmerly, J.: Maryland Medical Journal; 1985; 34 (10).
 2. Anderson and Van Nierop: Basic Nutrition Facts: A Nutrition Reference; 1989; pp. 23-2 to 23-7.
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